United Nations S/PV.4164 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

4164th meeting

Friday, 23 June 2000, 2.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Levitte	(France)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Listre
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Jamaica	Mr. Ward
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mr. Theron
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Holbrooke

Agenda

Briefing by Mr. Carl Bildt, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

00-49885 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 2.55 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I invite the representative of Bulgaria to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sotirov (Bulgaria): Since my delegation is addressing the Security Council for the first time this month, may I start by congratulating you, Mr. President, for the intensive programme of work of the Council for the month of June and by expressing my gratitude for organizing this important open debate on the situation in the Balkans. My thanks go also to Mr. Carl Bildt, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, for his comprehensive briefing on this issue.

We would like to express our deep appreciation for the valuable contribution to today's debate by Mr. Javier Solana, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union and High Representative for the European Union Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Bulgaria has already aligned itself with the statement of the European Union on the situation in the western Balkans Therefore, I would like to make only some additional comments and express our position on issues of specific concern to Bulgaria as a country bordering that turbulent region.

Bulgaria is deeply committed to normalization of the situation in the western Balkans and in the improvement of good neighbourliness and cooperation. The four wars waged in the western Balkans during the last decade had a very negative impact on the whole region.

Therefore, the Bulgarian Government launched several regional initiatives in order to find durable solutions to the persisting problems. The most important and ongoing one is perhaps the regular convening of informal meetings of the Prime Ministers of the countries bordering the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to deal with the problems in South-eastern Europe. The first meeting of this kind, initiated by my Government, was organized in the Bulgarian town of Hissar on 21-22 January 2000. It contributed to the more active involvement of the countries neighbouring the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the decision-making process on the future of the region and in tackling the core issues of security and stability.

The second meeting was held in March this year in Budapest and the third is scheduled for this weekend in Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia. Another initiative demonstrating the active Bulgarian foreign policy in the region is the Joint Declaration of the Presidents of Macedonia and Bulgaria on the situation in the Balkans, which was adopted in May this year. We consider these efforts to be part of the international community's quest for stability in south-eastern Europe.

Recent events in Kosovo have proven once again that the establishment of peace in a society torn by prolonged ethnic conflict is an enormously complex and time consuming process. To date, some progress has been achieved in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), but very little has yet to be accomplished regarding peaceful inter-ethnic coexistence in Kosovo. Some of the obstacles which hinder the establishment of peace are the ongoing violence, the unresolved issues of the missing and detained, the return of refugees and economic and social insecurity.

We are particularly concerned by the incidence of attacks on the peacekeeping forces. Public opinion in my country is sensitive to the issue, since Bulgaria has representatives in the Kosovo Force, the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We appeal to the leaders of all communities in Kosovo to take decisive action towards putting an immediate end to all violence. Bulgaria also urges the leaders of Kosovo to encourage cooperation and tolerance in the spirit of the declarations they have adopted. In order to facilitate the reconciliation process, the Bulgarian Government has established active contacts with the leaders of the two main ethnic communities in Kosovo.

It is of particular importance that the international community adhere strictly to the objectives of a unified, multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo. Since there are no civil structures in Kosovo, the delay of reforms could lead to the establishment of undemocratic institutions. It is crucial that the population become politically mature, which will make possible the establishment of a civil society free of criminal structures.

The acceleration of the political process in Kosovo has key importance for the success of the international community's efforts to create conditions for lasting peace in the region. In this context, we

express our regret regarding the decision of the Kosovo Serbs to end their participation in the joint administrative structures. Bulgaria commends UNMIK's determination to pursue its preparations for local elections in Kosovo, to be held in the fall. These elections would give legitimacy to the political actors and create conditions for the participation of the population in the political process and Government of Kosovo. However, the participation of all refugees and displaced persons, irrespective of their ethnic origins, is of critical significance to the success of the elections. Otherwise, the elections will be instrumental in legalizing ethnic cleansing in the region.

The success of the peace process depends also on the economic reconstruction and development of Kosovo and on establishing effective mechanisms, including those for restricting the black market economy. Bulgaria has repeatedly declared its readiness to participate actively in the process of economic reconstruction and has proposed different ways to ensure the greater involvement of the private sector. We consider that such an approach to the problem by the international community would definitely confirm that the countries of the region are part of the solution for Kosovo.

Regarding another key issue in the western Balkans, Bulgaria is fully committed to the completion of the peace process and the strengthening of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent, sovereign and democratic State. Peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina are closely related to the security of south-eastern Europe and the prospects for its integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. Holding pluralistic elections is a key element of the successful functioning of democratic institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Local elections held on 8 April this year proved that the democratic parties have the potential to win the trust of society.

There is a danger, however, that the economic challenges Bosnia and Herzegovina is facing could undermine the achievements that have been made so far. The international community should not give up its commitment to a region where peace is so fragile. Lasting solutions to the problems can be achieved on the basis of democratization in the whole region. We support the policy of reforms in Montenegro carried out by President Djukanovic. His Government is making a sustained effort to establish civil society institutions and a market economy. In foreign policy terms, Montenegro is aiming at opening and incorporating the Republic into the ongoing processes of cooperation and integration in the region and in Europe, which must be appreciated. The recent municipal elections held in the capital Podgorica and in Herceg-Novi are of crucial importance for enhancing the positive processes in Montenegro and thus will contribute to the enlargement of the democratic space in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Bulgaria is alarmed by the deterioration of the political situation in Serbia, caused by the escalation of the repressive measures of the regime against the opposition, independent mass media, civil organizations and academic institutions. We call on the authorities in Serbia to stop these negative trends and developments. Democratization requires the effective integration of the different ethnic groups into the political process in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We believe that this is closely related to preserving the unity and territorial integrity of that country.

Our position of principle is that a lasting settlement of the unsolved problems on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, and especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, cannot be achieved on the basis of the impunity of the organizers and implementers of the policy of ethnic cleansing and of other serious violations of international humanitarian law. Therefore, the support of Bulgaria for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is unconditional. My country renders active assistance to the Tribunal and shares the view that its work should become more effective and speedy.

Last but not least, the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe proves that the joint efforts of the international community in tackling the challenges in the region can succeed only if they are based on a comprehensive approach. In this regard, the Stability Pact plays an important and constructive role. We, as a country that has suffered huge economic losses, amounting to $6.2 billion, from the recent conflicts in the Balkans, are extremely interested in its prompt implementation. The Stability Pact, in our view, should not turn into another bureaucratic structure; it must be a political driving force in the reconstruction of the whole region. We are expecting a pragmatic approach, practical results and the implementation of concrete Stability Pact projects.

In conclusion, let me assure the Council that the lasting commitment of the international community to the Balkans gives us a reason to be optimistic about the future sustainable development of our region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Slovenia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Petrič (Slovenia): Let me first say that Slovenia fully associates itself with the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to thank Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, Mr. Carl Bildt, for his briefing. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the High Representative for the European Union Common Foreign and Security Policy and Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union (EU), Mr. Javier Solana, and to thank him for his contribution to today's debate. We consider his appearance today to be symbolic confirmation of the strengthened commitment of the EU to the region. Above all we thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate.

South-eastern Europe, the Balkans, is a region in which the international community has made a series of mistakes, but has also had successes. The international community enabled the smooth transition of Eastern Slavonia, prevented the spillover of conflicts and tensions into the Republic of Macedonia and averted a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo. The necessary action of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, as well as the year-long efforts of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force, represent a success, in spite of the problems that Kosovo is still facing. Bosnia and Herzegovina has every prospect of taking its place in Europe as a multi-ethnic and democratic country with an urgent need for economic revival. Numerous lessons were learned in the past 10 years and we are optimistic that, in the future, the international community will be able to relate to the whole region as a model of successful international involvement that brought it from the midst of conflict to democratic and multi-ethnic societies, economic prosperity and integration with the rest of Europe.

We strongly support your approach to consider South-East Europe comprehensively and in the regional prospective, since all the problems there are related and interconnected. Much too often the specific problems of the region have been approached separately, individually, as they popped up. It is true that the region was, and still is, loaded with religious, national and ethnic antagonisms and conflicts. However, it is also true that nations in the former Yugoslavia lived, coexisted and cooperated in peace.

The fall of the Berlin Wall created an opportunity for nations in South-East Europe too to join the process of democratization and transformation. Unfortunately, however, the extreme nationalistic and basically still Communist regime in Belgrade provoked the crisis in order to try to stop these processes.

This policy of inequality and superiority is, by the way, still pursued by the Belgrade Government, even here in the United Nations, by denying four successor States their equal rights regarding succession to the predecessor State and by not complying with Security Council resolution 777 (1992) and General Assembly resolution 47/1. The Council in its resolution considered that "the State formerly known as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has ceased to exist" and the Assembly decided that "the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ... should apply for membership in the United Nations". It seems that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia pretends to be the only State to enjoy the rights of United Nations membership without ever applying for membership.

The indictment of the highest leaders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is the border that separates the regime in Belgrade from the rest of the world. Full legitimacy of leaders indicted by the International Tribunal established with the authority of the Security Council under Chapter VII and composed of the distinguished international judges elected in the General Assembly is questionable, to say the least.

Individual responsibility for the war crimes must be established in order to prevent the unjustified notion of the collective guilt of the whole nation. The only way for the international community to proceed is to extend full support for the work of the Tribunal so that it will be able to quickly conclude its proceedings.

We are aware that there will be no self-sustaining peace and stability in the region without the full cooperation and integration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the region as well. For reasons explained above, this cannot be the current regime in Belgrade. The international community must cooperate with, support and encourage the forces within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that are striving for democracy, peace, reconciliation, economic recovery and a return to simple normalcy of life.

We share the hopes of seeing the new, democratic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia soon being part of a stable and prosperous South-East Europe. Serbian people have suffered a lot and long during last decade, and they have the right to a normal and decent life, free of despair, intimidation, fear and isolation.

I am glad that Branco Lukovat, the Foreign Minister of Montenegro is attending today's session. By denying equal rights to the constituent Montenegrin nation, and by constant pressure on and threats against the democratically elected Government of Montenegro, Belgrade is as well losing its legitimacy to speak for Montenegro.

In this context I would like to draw attention of the Council to document S/2000/611. Tensions between Belgrade and Podgorica is a type of dispute the continuation of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. It therefore deserves closer attention of the Security Council.

We would like to recall the statement by the President of the Council on the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts, of 30 November 1999 (S/PRST/1999/34). In this statement the Council emphasized its continuing commitment to addressing the prevention of armed conflicts and recognized the importance of its early consideration of situations which might deteriorate into armed conflicts. The Council expressed its readiness to consider appropriate preventive action in response to the matters brought to its attention by States or the Secretary-General and which it deems likely to threaten international peace and security. We want to stress that the situation of Montenegro requires appropriate attention and action of this Council, better early than too late.

A specific characteristic of the current efforts for peace in the region is the creation and functioning of the Stability Pact for South-East Europe. The Stability Pact offers a unique opportunity for further stabilization and strengthening of peace in the region, primarily through recognition that full democratization and respect for the rule of law, economic revival and reintegration, return of refugees, reconciliation and larger security are conditions for the full normalization of the relations in the region. Furthermore, the Stability Pact gives specific meaning to the notion that South-East Europe is part of Europe and that the long-term solutions for its future clearly lie within the process of European integration.

Slovenia has successfully developed friendly relations with all nations in the region of South-East Europe and is determined to continue to strengthen them in the future. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is the only country in the region with which we have no diplomatic or consular relations. This is due to the preconditions posed by the Government in Belgrade, that Slovenia recognize the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a continuing legal personality of the former State and thus accept inequality among the successor States of former Yugoslavia.

Slovenia is determined to contribute to the revitalization of the region with all its efforts. In the past few years we proved ourselves capable of contributing constructively to the strivings of the countries of the region to become a democratic and prosperous part of Europe.

I would just like to mention that the International Trust Fund for Demining collected $28 million for demining in Bosnia and Herzegovina and is today the most active demining programme in the country, expanding its activities to Kosovo. We are also engaging in activities to revitalize the economic processes in the region, and more than 200 Slovenian investments are presently engaged in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone.

Economic development and cooperation among the countries in the region, based on their own independent will, on an equal basis and with mutual interest is the only way to normalize the relations in the region as a part of a democratic, stable and united Europe. The role of the international community and especially the European Union thus is crucial, not simply because of the continuing need for donor resources for the programmes to revitalize the economic processes, but more importantly, in providing

the prospect of a future for the region and its peoples to be integrated in a free, democratic and prosperous Europe.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Austria. I invite to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I have the honour to speak in Austria's capacity as Chair-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Permit me at the outset to thank Mr. Carl Bildt for his excellent presentation this morning. His analysis of the regional problems enables us to see the issues in a larger context. We fully share his view that only a broad regional approach can enable us to achieve the establishment of lasting peace and stability in the region. The overriding goal of self-sustaining stability based on a firm regional framework can be achieved only through active commitment and active participation of the local population and local politicians.

In that context, Wolfgang Petritsch developed the concept of "ownership", which calls on the local population to become fully involved in the rebuilding of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Like previous speakers, I am pleased to hail recent positive developments in the region. The elections and the new Government in Croatia have demonstrated that people and politicians are taking responsible positions on their future.

We have also seen promising developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There has been a significant rise in the return of refugees; the security situation has improved; the military budget has declined; and the Brcko district has been established. However, many of these positive developments occurred only after the High Representative had made use of his powers. Genuine cooperation among the Bosnian ethnic groups is, unfortunately, still the exception.

Members of the Council are fully aware of the various projects of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the region, especially in the fields of free media, refugee return, human rights and police training. Let me therefore only briefly address the main current project of the OSCE in the western Balkans: the local elections in Kosovo in October and the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in November. I would like to concentrate on this issue because it is central to the question at hand: how to involve the local population and get them to accept active responsibility for their own political future. There is no better instrument than free and fair elections. Clearly, not everyone chooses to participate in that process, but everybody should have the opportunity to do so.

For that reason, the OSCE and its chairperson-in-office, the Austrian Foreign Minister, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, will continue to support all efforts to create an environment which enables the participation of all citizens in this process. Democracy is the cornerstone of a peaceful future in the Balkans, but there must also be an end to ethnic tension; there must also be sustainable economic recovery; there must also be the safe return of refugees; and above all, there must be a regional solution with a clear European perspective.

In conclusion, let me express the appreciation of the chairperson-in-office of the OSCE for the excellent cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, both at Headquarters and in the field. Considering the complexity of the tasks and the differences in mandates and structures of the missions, it is not surprising that initial difficulties arose. Today, however, the common achievements demonstrate that sound cooperation can benefit both organizations, alleviating the burdens and responsibilities of each organization.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Čalovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): When I am referred to in the way that you, Mr. President, just referred to me, it is my duty to state that I am the Permanent Representative of the present Macedonia, not the "former" Macedonia.

Let me at the outset express my satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, the Permanent Representative of France, presiding over this very important meeting of the Security Council on the Balkans, a subject of crucial importance to my country, the Republic of Macedonia, and to our region, South-eastern Europe. The position of the Republic of Macedonia coincides with that expressed by the representative of Portugal speaking on behalf of the European Union and by the High Representative for the European Union Common

Foreign and Security Policy, His Excellency Mr. Javier Solana.

The history of the Balkans, of South-eastern Europe, or of the countries situated in the Balkan peninsula is, as members know, full of examples of armed conflict. The First World War started there; the Second World War lasted the longest; since the end of the cold war there have been four armed conflicts, the most recent of them in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. That is too many, and I hope there will be no more.

Many books have been written and many analyses made with the aim of answering a number of questions. Why has all this happened? Who or what generates the problems, difficulties and armed conflicts in the region? How much of this is the result of the pursuit by local forces of regional, continental or global interests?

The simple answer is that they have all played a role; they have all contributed. The victims have been the ordinary people of the region, who have been struggling all along for a better life, for peace and development, and for their inalienable human rights.

Further wars or conflicts must therefore be prevented. In that endeavour, the United Nations and, of course, this body, the Security Council, have a responsibility and a duty to discharge. They have an important role to play, but, of course, not alone. The responsibility of the regional organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as other initiatives and organizations, is extremely important.

Also of crucial importance are the responsibilities and duties of all States of the region, and of course the activities and the behaviour of local actors: the political parties, the non-governmental organizations and the cultural, religious, business and other civil-society associations. In short, the mobilization of all forces in favour of peace and development in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations should be the basis, the foundation, of a new chapter in the history of the Balkans and of South-eastern Europe.

The best mechanism for that endeavour is the integration of all States of the region into the Euro-Atlantic structures, in the first place into the European Union and NATO. In that regard, I would like to note the importance of the presidency conclusions endorsed at the meeting of the European Council held on 19 and 20 June 2000, conclusions to which Mr. Solana made reference.

Here in the United Nations and elsewhere, the Republic of Macedonia has continuously emphasized several positions that are of crucial importance for the future development of the Balkans and of South-eastern Europe: the development of good-neighbourly relations among all States; the integration of all States into the European Union and NATO; the prevention of conflicts and the peaceful resolution of disputes; and full observance of international law.

Since 1993, as a result of the initiative of the Republic of Macedonia, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions on the situation in the Balkans and South-Eastern Europe. It has adopted resolutions 53/71, 48/84B, 50/80B, 51/55, 52/48 and 54/62.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress something that is common to all those resolutions and that should be taken into account by the Security Council. These General Assembly resolutions require that all States of the region should strictly observe the United Nations Charter and the provisions of international law; that there should be full normalization of relations among all States of the region; that the inviolability of international borders should be observed by all States; that relations among all States should be based on mutual respect; and that the needs of these States be speedily integrated into the European Union and that NATO should be fully supported.

The fifty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly, in accordance with these resolutions, will discuss the Balkans under provisional agenda items 67 and 68. The present discussion in the Security Council could be an important contribution to the one that will take place in the autumn.

The Republic of Macedonia is developing fruitful cooperation with all Balkan States; we have established diplomatic relations with all of them. We are constantly endeavouring to enrich our good-neighbourly relations with all of them and to make a positive contribution to the situation in our region.

The Balkans, the countries of South-Eastern Europe, should not be seen only as a geographical part of Europe, but also as an indivisible part of the political, economic, social and cultural development of

Europe. The essence of their orientation is truly European. It is true that these countries are at present going through a difficult period of transition, but one should not forget their contribution to European civilization. The potential of the region, both human and material, is such that one cannot doubt the great future of all countries of the region.

After the Kosovo war, the international community adopted two crucial decisions for the present and the future of the region. One was adopted by this body, the Security Council, resolution 1244 (1999), under which the war ended; the other was adopted by the European countries, the United States, Canada and Japan — the Stability Pact for South-East Europe, which is designed to help the transition of the region into a region free of violence and instability, an area of peace, stability, development, democracy and cooperation.

The implementation of these two decisions is of key importance for the future of South-Eastern Europe. The Security Council recently examined the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). Regrettably, that debate was restricted. It is, however, gratifying to note that the Security Council was unanimous in its demand for that resolution's full implementation. The implementation of the Stability Pact is under way, and we hope to see the result of this process soon.

Many other activities are also under way. I would like to mention the importance of the South-East European Cooperation Process, the Central European Initiative and other initiatives. However, the role of the United Nations and of its Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, of NATO and its Kosovo Force, of the European Union and of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as far as Kosovo is concerned, remains of paramount importance.

The countries of the region are extremely eager to see concrete results of the implementation of all these endeavours. In Macedonia, the expectations are high, particularly taking into account our positive contribution during the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, and recently during the Kosovo war. The delays and hesitation in the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999), of the Stability Pact, of the General Assembly resolutions and of other initiatives will only help the negative forces in the region, which, regrettably, are still active.

The region of South-Eastern Europe is not preoccupied with the consequences of the wars in the former Yugoslavia only. The economic development of all countries of the region is of the highest priority. The transition of the economies into market economies and their integration into the European and global economies are a daily preoccupation of all Governments in the region. This is a very difficult process, in particular since it creates numerous social problems which should be properly tackled so that the political and economic transition can go forward. Wars, crises, embargoes, United Nations sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and so forth, have hardly affected the Balkan economies in transition. My country, the Republic of Macedonia, is a very illustrative example. According to the latest assessments of our Ministry for Development, the damages are estimated at over $1.5 billion. The damages on the ground due to the cancellation of already concluded contracts amount to about $60 million — not to mention how much we have spent due to the acceptance of nearly 400,000 refugees from Kosovo who stayed in Macedonia for months. The most heavily affected industries were our metallurgy, civil engineering, basic chemical, metal processing, textile and leather processing industries. It is not difficult to see the effect of this on our otherwise small economy.

If the Security Council would like to shoulder fully its responsibility under the Charter, it should address the implementation of Article 50 of the Charter. The present preoccupation of the Security Council, mainly with the provisions of its own resolutions, should be addressed. The Security Council should struggle not only for the implementation of its own resolutions, but also for the implementation of the resolutions of other principal organs of our Organization, the implementation of the United Nations Charter and the implementation of international law. Of course, in that endeavour it should cooperate closely with the other principal organs of our Organization and with other organizations of the United Nations system, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

So we know what is going on in all parts of our region. We also know very well what the peoples of the region want. There is no need for new studies or new declarations. What is needed — what is expected — as I mentioned, are results of the commitments undertaken

by the international community and Member States. We need full support for the process of integration of our region into the Euro-Atlantic structures.

We should not be discouraged or held hostage by the behaviour of the destructive forces in the region. It is true that these destructive forces are too loud, but their strength is weak and they will not matter in the period to come. There will be no more armed conflicts in our region. I am sure about that.

The Security Council should send a clear message from this meeting that the time for all destructive forces has ended; that the Balkans and South-Eastern Europe have entered a period of cooperation and integration; and that this process is irreversible. The United Nations missions in Kosovo, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia must succeed. The process of the integration of the Balkan States into the Euro-Atlantic structures must proceed speedily, resolutely and without hesitation, and it, too, must succeed.

Before concluding, I would like to express my great appreciation for the endeavours of Mr. Carl Bildt, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, in particular for his untiring efforts to influence — and even to push — the positive developments in the region and, of course, for his informative and very useful briefing.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Belarus. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting and for giving us the opportunity to make a statement on the situation in the Balkans.

For almost 10 years now, the Balkans have been the focus of priority attention on the part of the world community. In that time, the Security Council has been making efforts to achieve a settlement and stability in that part of the world. My country's Government believes that today's discussion, which is being followed very carefully by all Member States of the United Nations, should not focus on resolving disputes and contradictions. It is our belief that the Security Council can and must become aware of the whole extent of its responsibility and determine the right strategy for United Nations action in the region over the coming years.

Over a year ago, Belarus joined other countries in welcoming Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which put an end to the military confrontation in Kosovo. Today, we would solemnly declare that it is the United Nations and the Security Council that must remain the guarantors of the political dialogue among all States in the region. Any actions circumventing the Security Council must be regarded as inadmissible and contrary to the norms of international law.

Belarus believes that the basic element of a Balkan settlement must remain the principle of the territorial integrity of all Balkan States, including the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. All the necessary legal instruments for this exist. The members of the Security Council and the Member States of the United Nations have those instruments available to them. They are, primarily, the Charter of the United Nations, the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement and the resolutions and decisions of the Security Council.

We cannot fail today to recognize that efforts by the United Nations have averted the worst: an escalation of the armed conflict in the Balkans. However, we cannot yet say that the crisis has passed. There are still many problems that constantly threaten the fragile stability in the region. We believe the most important and substantive of those to be the fact that there are not yet equal guarantees of security for the peoples and ethnic groups in a number of areas of the Balkans. We believe that security of person must apply equally to all. However, as in the past, we are still witnessing many incidents of cruelty and violence against representatives of ethnic and religious minorities.

A second important factor that must remain on the agenda of the Security Council and the world community is the establishment of legal frameworks for talks among all parties involved in the conflict. Obviously, it is only by respecting this condition that it will be possible to have a productive dialogue and arrive at a compromise.

Many difficult issues in Kosovo and the Balkans remain unresolved. In implementing the provisions of Security Council resolutions on the Balkans, many essentially new issues have arisen that are in fact unprecedented in the entire history of the United Nations. The most important in this regard was the

establishment of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and a mechanism whereby it could operate in the province.

Belarus welcomes the regular briefings by leaders of the Mission and the reports of the Secretary-General. But we believe that the experience of a body with such broad powers should be the subject of an exchange of views among all Members of the United Nations, possibly involving a broader circle of academics and political analysts. We believe that the Secretary-General's idea of a wide-ranging discussion within the Organizations about Kosovo's future — which has not taken place so far — rightly points us towards a fully transparent consideration of the problems of Kosovo and the Balkans as a whole.

The conclusion that the crisis in the Balkans began in Kosovo, and that it will end in that part of the Balkans, seems more true today than ever before. The Security Council, and all Members of the United Nations, have no more an important task to carry out than to untangle this web of contradictions. Belarus is willing to participate actively in that work.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I would like to begin by expressing our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening today's open meeting to review the situation in the Balkans.

The Balkans remain high on the international community's agenda as one of our most pressing issues. This is particularly so because the memories are still fresh of the events of recent years, when we witnessed the most brutal genocide and ethnic cleansing at the heart of Europe in over half a century. The wars are over now, but it is now time to work to consolidate peace through reconciliation and reconstruction processes and to minimize the prospects of the recurrence of violence.

In the context of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords was a landmark achievement, as the parties took a historic decision at Dayton to embrace peace by rejecting the path of war, destruction and devastation. The journey ahead was arduous, considering the deep fissures and cleavages caused to the very fabric of that society by the fratricidal war. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina deserve commendation for their courage and determination to accept peace and reconciliation as their collective goal.

During the last five years, the progress along the path of peace has been substantial, though it still remains fragile. The international community has been playing a pivotal rote in supporting the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the rebuilding of their country. It is a recognized fact that there cannot be a durable peace unless it is consciously and carefully nurtured by the people. Being the main beneficiaries of peace, they have to consolidate and strengthen peace.

Pakistan has always emphasized that faithful implementation of the Dayton Accords is central to durable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a united, sovereign and independent State. While the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has fulfilled its obligations to a large extent, the Republika Srpska is lagging behind in vital areas. We are particularly concerned at the lack of progress on the return of refugees and displaced persons, cooperation with the International Tribunal for war crimes, freedom of movement across the inter-entity boundary lines, the establishment of common State institutions, judicial and police reform and sustainable economic development.

The three communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina need to recognize the benefit of mutual cooperation in the nation- building process.

It is unfortunate that, despite concerns expressed by the international community, the war criminals still remain at large, mostly in the territories of the Republika Srpska and Serbia. The parties must implement the solemn commitments made at Dayton to pursue and apprehend war criminals. Pakistan believes that those who participated in mass killings must not go unpunished anywhere in the world, be it in Srebrenica, in Rwanda, in Kosovo or in Kashmir.

While some progress has been achieved in making the common State institutions effective and operational, a lot still needs to be done in this respect. Progress is relatively slow in the revival of Bosnia's economic and social structure. A comprehensive approach to economic reform would facilitate a homogeneous development of economic and trade between the two entities and across inter-entity boundary lines. On their part, the donor countries and

agencies must continue to provide the required financial and technical support.

Pakistan extended unequivocal moral, political, financial and material support to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in defence of international law and morality and as proof of our solidarity with them. Our support was and continues to be the manifestation of our conviction that no nation should be victimized because of its weakness and vulnerability, no people should be brutalized because of ethno-religious origin and no nation or people should be denied their inherent right to self-determination and right to wage a legitimate struggle for freedom.

I will now turn to the developments concerning Kosovo. The massive human tragedy which unfolded in Kosovo over a year ago was a source of deep distress and anxiety for the people of Pakistan, as it was for people all over the world. It was particularly shocking that, soon after Bosnia and Herzegovina, we witnessed yet another campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans by the same regime. The Belgrade authorities pursued systematic and deliberate policies of hatred and intolerance, aimed at decimating and uprooting a whole community because of its ethnic origin and beliefs. It is a matter of satisfaction that the international community responded to this grave challenge and prevented the brutalization of a whole community.

In the aftermath of the conflict, the international community has shouldered a robust challenge and a programme of augmenting the healing process in Kosovo —indeed, a daunting task. The United Nations Mission in Kosovo has made a difference. It has played a vital role in restoring peace and encouraging a process of reconciliation and reconstruction. There is a continuing need to provide support to the efforts to establish a harmonious inter-ethnic relationship, bring about economic reconstruction and build the institutions of pluralistic society. We hope these tasks, which need resilience and dedication, will be accomplished.

Pakistan closely followed the developments in Kosovo during the humanitarian crisis and contributed to the peace process through bilateral contacts and in international forums. Once the United Nations Mission was established, we contributed personnel to all segments of its operations.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to and support for efforts to achieve peace, reconciliation and prosperity for the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and, indeed, the entire Balkan region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I invite the representative of Albania to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): Allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for your excellent work in leading the Security Council and for the opportunity today to speak on a very important issue: peace, security and development in the Balkans.

We would like to warmly welcome the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, Mr. Carl Bildt, and the High Representative for the European Union Common Foreign and Security Policy, Mr. Javier Solana. They delivered important statements, full of ideas for the present situation and the future of the Balkans. Furthermore, I would like to express my Government's gratitude to Mr. Solana for his great contribution during the conflict in Kosovo.

From the outset, I should like strongly to support and thank the United States of America and its representative, Ambassador Holbrooke, for their principled and far-sighted position. We believe that the United States statement contributed towards preserving the importance of the Security Council by not turning it into a forum for endless rhetoric in which the perpetrators of war and massacres can give lectures on morality.

The issues raised this morning by Carl Bildt are part of a profound analysis that explains the conflict situation in the Balkans, a situation that is first and foremost a consequence of a traditional Balkan policy depending on outmoded *étatiste* concepts, with a mentality and philosophy influenced by the lengthy Byzantine and Ottoman dominations, and encouraged by undefined and irresolute action on the part of the international community in the early 1990s to find a long-term solution in favour of international peace and security. It can be said that, in some instances, the ambivalence, lack of commitment and inaction of the international community and Europe have been influenced by the European tradition of the balance of power and old preferences that often result in half-hearted and temporary solutions to Balkan problems.

It was the Dayton Peace Agreement, and later the intervention of the international community, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United States and Western European countries that prevented the spillover of the conflict throughout the Balkans and led to liberation, victory and hope for a lasting solution.

The continuation of the international community's commitment in the Balkans — not only for security reasons, but also for the region's economic and social development, as defined in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe — is the key to the success and future progress of the Balkan region. We are grateful for the assistance given by the European Union to the Balkans and for its leading role in the Stability Pact. The Stability Pact will create the conditions needed by the people of the Balkan region to overcome hatred, and becoming involved in the building of their common future will help them to understand that their interests lie in unity and not in division.

Success in achieving the goals of the Stability Pact will depend on many factors: the flow of investment and development projects, the commitment of the Balkan States and their cooperation in joint projects. The greater the help of the international community, the faster the positive changes will appear. The faster the aid of the international community, the fewer problems will be present in the Balkans.

Unfortunately, today, an obstacle to achieving the objectives of the Stability Pact is the criminal regime of Milosevic, who not only is the generator of tension and instability in the region, but also prevents uniformity of development in the region. Albania is of the view that the present isolation and the sanctions placed against the Belgrade regime should continue and be strengthened by all ways and means, a process that will surely bring the desired solution.

Albania, as a Balkan country, sees its future within the Balkan integrated community, with the goal of integration into the structures of the European Union and NATO. Working for the future, it is far from holding positions that generate instability or create conflicts. It is working to fulfil a great idea. It will contribute and commit itself to successfully implementing Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the mission of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo towards the creation of a multi-ethnic society and the democratic institutions necessary to govern the country.

We believe that the forthcoming municipal elections in Kosovo represent a further step towards achieving stability in the region. These elections will, for sure, increase the responsibility of the Kosovar Albanian community towards the objectives put forward by the international community. We think that the best solution for the region is that Kosovo, as an independent entity, be integrated directly into the European Union, thus eradicating the source of conflict and ignoring the nationalistic positions of the interested parties. This is the most just and best solution imposed by today's realities, and will at the same time ensure better respect for the great contribution of the international community towards peace, security and justice in the Balkan region. Any other solution would be artificial and temporary.

In closing, let me say that the international community will find a partner in Albania to work with for the achievement of peace and security in the Balkan region. We believe that Albania should be seen by the international community as an important and needed player in the process of the integration of the Balkans.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina): It is most positive to see you, Mr. President, in this position of leadership — such a trusted face and such confident words from a leader from our part of the world.

I should also like to welcome the words of Mr. Solana and Mr. Bildt. I believe they have made a very good contribution.

For over eight years now, I have spoken before this Council of the plight of Bosnia and Herzegovina and our confidence, despite everything, in the future of coexistence, tolerance and pluralism. Maybe some of have come to doubt my sincerity; others may have questioned my sanity. Unfortunately, generalizations about ethnic hatreds and age-old religious animosities still plague debates about our region within this Council. Again, we reject the notion that ethnicity and religion are the cause of war and instability in our region. Rather, ethnicity and religion are used as

weapons of war by the forces of political darkness that, unfortunately, still exist.

That is why we supported the vote rejecting the participation of the current regime in Belgrade in this debate and we further endorse the comments of Ambassador Holbrooke, Ambassador Greenstock and others on the status of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in the United Nations.

But now I move on to an equally important matter. It is our opinion that much can be done between people of goodwill given the opportunity to work together. Where institutions may be sadly inadequate — and that certainly is the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina — goodwill can overcome such structural deficiencies. Mr. Milos Prica at one time may have been considered my enemy. Suspicion and animosity were rife. Today, we are compatriots in the same progressive endeavours in the service of our one common country. He is my Deputy now; he sits behind me. I have full confidence in his commitment as well as in his words.

I would therefore like to pass on to Milos Prica the opportunity to continue and make the statement on behalf of our delegation. It is important that now the Council also hear his words — our words; feel his commitment and our commitment; and understand the common goodwill and vision of our one future.

With your permission, Sir, I would like to cede the floor to Mr. Prica.

The President (*spoke in French*): As I hear no objection from the members of the Council, I readily give the floor to Mr. Prica. It is indeed the finest symbol of the national reconciliation that has emerged in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Prica (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Allow me first to express my gratitude for this opportunity to address the Council in the name of the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as for the great interest and concern you are expressing for the situation in our region. We would also like to reiterate our confidence and pleasure in your initiatives and leadership.

Before I explain our position and our concerns regarding the situation in the Balkans, let me once again underline what a great benefit we have enjoyed since the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed, due to the joint effort of the whole international community. Because of these commitments, we are now far from where we were just four years ago. Of course, we are fully aware that much more has to be done to reach the point at which Bosnia and Herzegovina may be proclaimed as a self-sustained State not dependent on foreign assistance.

Nevertheless, we are sure that things are moving in the right direction. I would especially like to emphasize how important the help being provided is in regard to the reform of our economic and judiciary system, which we desperately needed to overcome and replace the old, stiff and non-productive former structure.

Finally, it is our firm understanding that the Dayton Peace Agreement has no alternative and must be completely implemented.

It is not even necessary to mention how interested we are in the situation in the region where we belong, and how the situation and especially the instabilities have a huge negative impact on our country. We are watching very carefully the situation in Serbia, the Kosovo crisis which is far from being resolved, and the uncertainties in Montenegro. In that regard, we may express our deep concerns about the non-democratic regime in Belgrade, led by Mr. Milosevic. We see the changes as inevitable and hope they are carried out as soon as possible for the sake of stability in the region as well as for the benefit of the people of Serbia, who deserve a place in modern Europe, and the modern world.

At the same time, we strongly support the democratic changes in Montenegro. We see the cooperation with healthy, prominent Serbian figures, working together and redoubling the efforts to democratize the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as in their and our vital interest.

The Kosovo situation is still far from being resolved. We fully support and respect resolution 1244 (1999) in all that it means and expect it to be fully implemented. We expect that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), with the help of the whole international community, will be able to provide security for all ethnic groups and start the process of reconciliation.

Finally, we would like to make several points. After all the things we have experienced in the

twentieth century, our thought is that any attempt at changing borders in the Balkans will lead to another war. Internationally recognized borders have to be fully respected by all.

Nonetheless, the solutions for long-term stability in our region lie within us — but also within you, the international community, and in particular the European family. Even though so many issues in our region have been internationalized, longer-term solutions depend on our people's ability to commit to democratic and free market reforms, and at the same time, the European Union's willingness to recognize us as equal partners.

Therefore, we see the long-term, definitive and the only satisfactory solution for the whole region in the full integration into the European Union. That is the only way the full and final reconciliation can be reached and the whole region can become prosperous.

After all, the precedent of Western Europe in the post-Second-World-War period, after centuries of nationalist wars, is relevant for the people of our region as well. We appeal to the European States, members of the European Union, to help the whole region to reach European standards, to prepare ourselves for becoming a part of a united Europe, and to encourage all Balkan States to move in that direction.

Of course, we are really delighted to hear from you, Mr. President, regarding the initiative for a summit of the European Union and western Balkan leaders, and we appreciate that very much. We see that as a preparation for us to join Europe. At the same time, I would like to thank Mr. Javier Solana. I do not want to miss this opportunity to thank Mr. Carl Bildt, our old friend. We have a great memory of him when he was High Representative of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to extend my sincere thanks for organizing this open debate meeting today.

We had hoped that this meeting would be really open to all those who are interested in participating. However, and unfortunately, we were surprised by a practice that is very difficult to explain — namely, preventing the representative of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Ambassador Jovanovic, from taking part. This practice does not allow this open debate to realize its objective, because a major viewpoint is already absent from this debate.

Raising the issue of the succession of Yugoslavia as an excuse to deprive the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of the opportunity to take part in this meeting is an illogical excuse and is not in harmony with the Charter of the United Nations. Articles 31 and 32 permit a Member State of the United Nations, as well as a non-member, to take part in discussing any issue that is before the Security Council and which particularly affects its own interests.

On the other hand, preventing the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from taking part in this meeting happened at a time when there is a proliferation of hearing sessions and open meetings held by the Council. Whoever is interested in taking part in these meetings is allowed to, ranging from the representatives of the rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Senator Jesse Helms, who lectured the Council at length, disdaining the Charter of the United Nations. So why is the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, an independent State and a Member of the United Nations which is directly concerned with this particular matter, an exception here?

The current situation in the Balkans is characterized by fragile balances in all political, military and economic matters. The events of recent years have proved that any foreign intervention that has suspicious intent, and any violation of the Charter of the United Nations — particularly of the principles of respect for the sovereignty of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the inadmissibility of the use or the threat of the use of force in international relations — have further complicated the situation in the Balkans.

The NATO aggression led by the United States against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 24 March 1999 struck a hard blow for all the efforts by the international community to solve the crisis. It was also a hard blow for the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the rules of international law and the authority and prestige of the Security Council.

The Secretary-General was right to say that the use of force without Security Council authorization jeopardized the essence of the collective international

security system based on the Charter of the United Nations. In the wake of the military aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, we saw the persistent use of other forms of aggression: attempts to bring about isolation and exclusion; the imposition of sanctions; and interference in the internal affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including threats to its territorial integrity.

At this very meeting we heard the representative of the United States of America call upon members of the Council to meet with the representative of one of the entities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. That amounted to a call for the partition of an independent State and blatant interference in its internal affairs. It also set another grave precedent in the work of the Security Council. It is a destructive policy whose real purpose is not to establish peace and stability in the Balkans, but rather to further the expansionist political interests of certain influential international parties at the expense of the peace and stability of the Balkans and of the territorial integrity of its States.

Peace in the Balkans will come about through respect for the United Nations and through serious-minded, direct dialogue among all parties in the region. What is required is a comprehensive outlook regarding all elements of the crisis, with a view to resolving it. Moreover, the international community must provide impartial and sincere assistance in bringing peace and stability to the Balkans.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Croatia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): It is my pleasure to thank the Permanent Representative of France, His Excellency Ambassador Jean-David Levitte, in his capacity as President of the Security Council, for organizing this open debate on a region that has been the object of so much attention in the past 10 years.

We also welcome the presence of Mr. Bildt and Mr. Solana, and appreciate their valuable contributions.

The protracted crisis in South-eastern Europe has challenged the international community in many respects. It has strained its collective security resources and has drawn on its humanitarian and economic resources. It has also tested its political resolve and its moral and legal consciousness alike. In spite of a substantial investment of energy and resources and some notable achievements, much work still remains ahead. The return of refugees and displaced persons throughout the region, demining, rebuilding, economic and social reconstruction and development, and healing and reconciliation remain standing objectives for the years to come. Most important, the countries in the region have yet to take charge of their own fate and to find their respective ways towards sustainable peace, the rule of law, protection of human rights and economic development.

There are some grounds for optimism in that respect. People in the region have strengthened their resolve to break out of the spiral of instability and face the challenges of full democratization. In that regard, we welcome the recognition of Croatia's efforts and appreciate the words of encouragement addressed to us today. Indeed, Croatia has managed to pull itself from the circle of crisis and has joined the circle of well-intentioned neighbouring countries willing to help those still in need.

Croatia's case serves as the best example that positive change in the region is possible. Moreover, it proves that such a change is welcomed and rewarded by the international community. Given the main priority of the Croatian Government – that is, to make up for time lost – the demonstrated willingness of the European Union to speed up the integration process for qualified newcomers, based on their own individual achievements, remains of extraordinary importance. It is a clear signal to other countries of the region that, if the conditions are met, Europe's door remains open.

In that context, we welcome the initiative of President Chirac to pay special attention during the French presidency of the European Union to ways to accelerate the integration of the region into a European mainstream, and we pledge Croatia's full support. In our opinion, the French initiative to convene a summit to serve that purpose should enlist support and participation of a broader range of neighbouring countries.

Over a short period of time following the elections held earlier this year, Croatia has made substantial progress in joining political, economic and security institutions and mechanisms and in developing good-neighbourly relations. The Croatian Government is also conducting an active regional policy aimed at establishing a sustainable peace. This includes

participation in the Stability Pact for South-East Europe and consistent implementation of the refugee return programme.

More precisely, our efforts are directed at the consolidation of cooperation in all fields, and particularly at extending political stability and economic revival in South-eastern Europe. In this regard, we are fully committed to the implementation of the Dayton accords, and supportive of the international efforts to achieve sustainable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While the situation in Croatia has improved and the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is improving, the situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia raises serious concerns. After affecting other countries that emerged after the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, the crisis has now returned to its origin: to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The same ideology and the same regime that caused so much suffering during the aggression waged on Croatia and on Bosnia and Herzegovina now represents an obstacle to the democratic dialogue on how to resolve ethnic tensions in Kosovo and protect equality and the legitimate interests of citizens of Montenegro. It is in Croatia's interest to see the Normalization Agreement with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia fully implemented. But prior to democratic developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, this appears unrealistic. Meanwhile, we will continue to normalize relations with Montenegro, especially regarding the free movement of civilians throughout the Prevlaka area, towards which the Milosevic regime still harbours territorial pretensions.

Our cooperation with other successor States to the former Yugoslavia has been good and is constantly growing in both the bilateral and the multilateral spheres. Among other issues, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia, united by a common interest in developing good-neighbourly relations — and consequently, stability and prosperity in the region — have invested sustained joint efforts to resolve with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia the issues of succession to their common predecessor State. Resolving the succession issue on the basis of the equality of all five successor States, a basis which the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia stubbornly rejects, is a prerequisite for sustainable peace and stability in the region.

Security Council resolution 777 (1992) and General Assembly resolution 47/1 affirmed the principle of equality of all successor States; however, they were never fully implemented. Some statements heard today are encouraging with regard to their full implementation in the foreseeable future.

Another issue which directly impinges on the prospects of sustainable peace in the region is that of criminal accountability for the tragic events that occurred during the conflict on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. It is vital that the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia reflect in its work the extent and the level of the involvement of the various sides and the war crimes committed. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's unwillingness to cooperate with this Tribunal remains a serious obstacle in this respect. As long as the indicted war criminals, such as Milošević, Mladić, Karadžić, Šljivančanin, Radić, Mrkšić, Martić and others remain at large, justice, healing and reconciliation cannot be achieved.

In order to prevent a distorted recollection of the tragic events that took place, and for the historical record, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have raised genocide claims against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia before the International Court of Justice. These proceedings are not directed against Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia or the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but against the State authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which are to be held responsible. In a joint statement issued recently, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia expressed the belief that their cooperation in the proceedings of the International Court of Justice against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia would ultimately contribute to democratization, reconciliation and the establishment of lasting peace and stability in the region.

Finally, Croatia firmly believes that the efforts of the international community will prove successful and self-sustained stability in South-East Europe will be ensured only when the countries of the region are able to assume responsibility for their future. For some of them, this might still be a long way off, but it remains worthwhile to further invest individual and collective efforts.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Representative of Croatia for the kind words he addressed to me. I believe it is a very fine symbol that the last speaker in this important debate

should be the representative of a country that has witnessed particularly encouraging developments.

By way of conclusion to our discussion, I wish to give the floor to Mr. Carl Bildt to draw conclusions and respond to the comments and questions addressed to him.

Mr. Bildt: I think the main conclusion to be drawn after all these hours is that your initiative to organize this debate, Mr. President, has been not only highly valuable but also highly valued by all who have taken part and by all of us who have been able to benefit from listening to the different interventions that have highlighted both the problems that are there and the possibilities for moving forward that I think we see.

On a somewhat more personal note, let me start by expressing my appreciation for the intervention of the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, because I know both Muhamed Sacirbey and Milos Prica as old friends of mine, but certainly not friends of each other. They were truly enemies on two sides of what was the bitterest war in Europe during the second part of the last century. The fact not only that they can sit together, but that they can also speak together in front of the United Nations Security Council — certainly not pretending that everything is over, or that there are not any problems — I think that, more than anything else, demonstrates, in spite of all the difficulties in the region, that there is a way forward — not an easy one, not a fast one, but there is a way forward. I also express my personal thanks for their respective contributions.

I think we have also been able to listen to constructive and forward-looking interventions by the representatives of Slovenia, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania and Bulgaria in which they have all, from their respective points of view, highlighted both their respective problems in their respective parts of the region and the need for that regional approach, that search for a more comprehensive political solution within the framework of Europe. This was, indeed, the centrepiece of my intervention; and, if I may say so, it was indeed that of the intervention of Mr. Javier Solana on behalf of the European Union.

I have noted with satisfaction the strong support that has been expressed for the efforts and the approach of the United Nations, from Ambassador Holbrooke of the United States and from Ukraine, just to take two examples of nations that, on some of the other issues that have under discussion today, have taken somewhat divergent approaches. But the support both of them have expressed, as well as others, is, of course, something that we will carry forward in our work.

At this late hour I will not take up all of the different issues. A lot of them will be addressed in the course of the regular briefings that are given by the Secretariat to the Council on the different peacekeeping missions in the area. Let me just, in terms of Kosovo, stress one note regarding the concern that has been expressed by several members of the Council about the need to find out the fate of persons who are missing as a result of that conflict. A lot of them — most of them — are of Albanian origin, and there are also those of other origins — Serb or others. We must press forward to find out as much as we can about their fate.

But let me also take this occasion to recall that there are still thousands of people missing as a result of the conflicts in Bosnia and Croatia. We must not cease international efforts to find out as much as we can about the fate of those missing. That is important, not only for the families of those concerned, but also for the long-term efforts at reconciliation.

I also note the concerns that have been expressed about the human rights situation in Kosovo. I think all present are aware, and it has been expressed by most of the speakers, that both the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the international security presence in terms of the Kosovo Force are doing their utmost to safeguard the human rights of each and every person. The fact that they do not always succeed is not due to their not trying, and I think it is important to recognize this. This is continuing, and it is disturbing. I just read a report that came in a couple of hours ago about what happened very early yesterday morning when six mortar grenades landed within the premises of the very old Orthodox monastery of Dečani in southern Kosovo. That monastery, where the mortars are coming down close to the church and close to the monks, is a treasure of Orthodox culture in Europe. Of course, we must do everything we can to counter that sort of violence.

I have been asked by several speakers to comment further about the situation in and around and concerning Montenegro. Let me just repeat what I said in late February and again today: the federal authorities in Belgrade that have, in my opinion — and I think that

is very clear — been abusing their power and the elected representatives of the Republic of Montenegro are on a slow but steady collision course. Unless we or they or changes can alter these trends, that collision will occur, with negative consequences.

What we can do, of course, is to highlight the problems that are there from the side of the United Nations. I can only continue to urge that political, economic and other support be given to the elected representatives of Montenegro. That is important in order to increase the possibilities for them to pursue the not entirely easy balancing of different interests, which they have so far done successfully and which has made a contribution to stability and democracy that has been highly appreciated by the international community.

Finally, let me underline what I think is the absolutely crucial importance of a continued dialogue on these issues within the Council. The experience of the last 10 years is that if the international community — and the Council is the ultimate expression of the international community — is not united in some sort of way behind the consensus of what we area trying to achieve in the region in terms of stability and peace, then we are not likely to succeed. So the dialogue with and within the Council is absolutely essential as we prepare ourselves for that day when the conditions are there for the comprehensive regional settlement of the political issues, which will also pave the way for a resolution of all of the "minor" issues that we have been addressing today.

In that spirit, and as an old friend as well, let me thank you, Mr. President, for this initiative and for this debate. I can assure you that I will do our utmost to live up to the expectations expressed today.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Carl Bildt for having so eloquently drawn the conclusions from a lengthy, high-quality and forward-looking debate.

I have noted a feeling of optimism in this debate. I have also taken note of the advice Mr. Bildt has just given us. There will have to be other debates of this nature because the international community as a whole will, for many years to come, have to pay attention to and assist the western Balkan region. The destiny of that region is linked with that of Europe and, first and foremost, with the European Union.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.